



**U.S. Department of Justice
U.S. Attorney's Office
Western District of Texas**

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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AUSTIN MAN PLEADS GUILTY TO CAR JACKING SPREE

United States Attorney Johnny Sutton announced that this afternoon, Adrian Santa Cruz, age 25, of Austin, Texas, pleaded guilty before U.S. Magistrate Judge Robert Pitman to two counts of car jacking and one count of brandishing a firearm during and in relation to a crime of violence, stemming from a car jacking spree in Austin and San Antonio during the early morning hours of August 15, 2006. An accomplice, Dante Rodriguez Arellano, pleaded guilty to the same charges in federal court on October 23, 2006.

"Thanks to the outstanding work of local law enforcement along with the FBI these two violent car jackers were brought to justice and have learned the hard way that crime doesn't pay," stated U.S. Attorney Johnny Sutton.

As part of their guilty pleas, the defendants admitted that just after midnight on August 15, 2006, in Austin, they robbed a male victim of his vehicle, wallet, and cell phone. A handgun was brandished at the victim during the robbery. The Defendants took the victim's car and headed to San Antonio. On the way, they used one of the victim's credit cards to make a purchase. At approximately 5:45 am, in a shopping plaza parking lot in San Antonio, the defendants car jacked a woman as she was arriving for work. They pulled up in the stolen vehicle they had taken in Austin, jumped out of the car, and brandished a handgun at the victim. They demanded her car keys and she immediately relinquished them. The victim was also ordered to hand over the jewelry she was wearing. Santa Cruz and Arellano then left in both stolen cars. Fortunately, neither victim was physically injured during either robbery.

Shortly thereafter, the defendants abandoned the stolen Austin vehicle at a truck stop in San Antonio. At approximately 9:00 am, the Defendants were seen driving the stolen San Antonio vehicle erratically, prompting a 911 call to the Seguin Police Department. Seguin police officers located the vehicle and attempted to stop it, but the robbers eluded police. Eventually, after a high speed pursuit, the stolen car broke down in Guadalupe County and the defendants fled. Arellano was captured after a short foot chase, but Santa Cruz evaded capture for two more days.

Both Santa Cruz and Arellano face a maximum possible penalty of 30 years, a \$500,000 fine, and 3 years of supervised release on the two car jacking charges. Their plea agreements provide that each will be sentenced to 15 years (180 months) on the firearm charge, which will be added to the sentence they receive for the car jacking offenses. Sentencing for Arellano is currently set for February 9, 2006; sentencing for Santa Cruz has not yet been scheduled.

This case was investigated by the Federal Bureau of Investigation, Austin Police Department, San Antonio Police Department, and Seguin Police Department. Assistant United States Attorney Matthew Devlin is prosecuting this case on behalf of the government.

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